

A SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE IN REGENERATING
DEPOLLUTION MEANS INTEGRATED IN AN EXHAUST LINE OF A
VEHICLE DIESEL ENGINE

The present invention relates to a system for
5 regenerating depollution means associated with oxidation
catalyst-forming means integrated in an exhaust line of a
motor vehicle diesel engine.

More particularly, the invention relates to a system
in which the engine is associated with common manifold or
10 "rail" means for feeding fuel to the cylinders of the
engine and adapted, at constant torque, to implement a
strategy of regeneration by injecting fuel into the
cylinders, in at least one post-injection operation.

During regeneration of depollution means such as,
15 for example, a particle filter, stages during which the
engine is idling (very low exhaust temperature) or during
which the vehicle accelerator pedal is being raised (no
injection of fuel in normal operation), are problematic
since they cause a drop in the temperature of the
20 exhaust, i.e. the exhaust line and the elements
integrated therein.

The use of one or more post-injections during such
stages in the operation of the engine makes it possible
to limit the drop in the temperature of the exhaust line
25 by relying on the catalytic conversion of the
hydrocarbons (HCs) produced by the combustion of the
post-injection(s) in the engine.

However, those strategies rely on the exothermic
reaction produced by the catalyst-forming means, it being
30 assumed that said means are active, where said means
comprise, for example, an oxidation catalyst or a NO_x
trap with a carbon monoxide/hydrocarbon (CO/HC) oxidation
function.

During stages in which the engine is returning to
35 idling as a result of the accelerator pedal being raised,
there is no main injection nor any pilot injection, so
the or each post-injection does not burn in the cylinder,

since post-injection merely causes the fuel to be vaporized in the form of HCs which are subsequently converted by the catalyst-forming means.

The inlet temperature of the oxidation catalyst-forming means is thus very low, and in spite of the exothermic catalytic reaction that is produced by the combustion of the HCs derived from the or each post-injection, the front face of the catalyst-forming means cools down progressively and its conversion activity becomes progressively deactivated.

While the engine is idling, in spite of using one or more post-injections, the temperature at the inlet to the catalyst-forming means is relatively low. The strategy of post-injection while idling also relies on the catalytic conversion of the HCs produced by the combustion of the post-injections into the engine. In spite of the catalytic reaction being exothermic, the front face of the catalyst-forming means cools down progressively and its conversion activity becomes progressively deactivated.

During the stage of returning to idling or a stage of prolonged idling, it can happen that the catalyst-forming means are thus no longer sufficiently active to convert all of the HCs, which leads to peaks of HCs downstream from the catalyst-forming means, and even to blue smoke and/or exhaust odors.

Furthermore, the use of post-injections leads to the lubricating oil being diluted with fuel, thereby degrading its lubrication properties, in particular reducing its viscosity, and if viscosity becomes too low, that can lead to damage to the engine.

The object of the invention is thus to solve these problems.

To this end, the invention provides a system for providing assistance in regenerating depollution means associated with oxidation catalyst-forming means integrated in an exhaust line of a motor vehicle diesel

engine, and in which the engine is associated with common rail means for feeding fuel to the cylinders of the engine and adapted, at constant torque, to implement a strategy of regeneration by injecting fuel into the 5 cylinders in at least one post-injection, the system being characterized in that it comprises:

- means for detecting a request for regeneration, and thus for post-injection;
- means for detecting a state in which the vehicle 10 accelerator pedal is being raised or a stage in which the vehicle engine is idling;
- acquisition means for acquiring the temperature downstream from the catalyst-forming means;
- means for responding to said temperature to 15 determine a maximum duration of post-injection application during stages in which the engine is returning to idling as a result of the accelerator pedal being raised and stages during which the engine is idling; and
- 20 - means for immediately interrupting the or each post-injection if the duration of post-injection utilization reaches the predetermined maximum duration of application during a stage of returning to idling, and/or for progressively reducing the or each post-injection when the duration of post-injection utilization reaches 25 the predetermined maximum duration of application during a stage of the engine idling.

According to other characteristics:

- the reduction means are adapted to reduce the or 30 each post-injection in application of a calibratable slope;
- the depollution means comprise a particle filter;
- the depollution means comprise a NOx trap;
- the fuel includes an additive for being deposited 35 together with the particles with which it is mixed on the depollution means in order to facilitate regeneration thereof;

- the fuel includes an additive that forms a NOx trap; and
- the engine is associated with a turbocharger.

The invention can be better understood on reading
5 the following description given purely by way of example
and made with reference to the accompanying drawing, in
which:

- 10 - Figure 1 is a block diagram showing the general
structure of a regeneration assistance system of the
invention; and
- Figure 2 is a flow chart showing the operation
thereof.

Figure 1 shows the general structure of a system for
providing assistance in the regeneration of depollution
15 means, given overall reference 1 in the figure, and
associated with oxidation catalyst-forming means given
overall reference 2, integrated in an exhaust line 3 of a
diesel engine 4 of a motor vehicle.

20 The engine may be associated with a turbocharger, in
which case the turbine portion 5 thereof is likewise
associated with the exhaust line, while the compressor
portion 6 of the turbocharger is placed upstream from the
engine.

25 Furthermore, the engine is also associated with
means 7 forming a common rail for feeding fuel to the
cylinders of the engine and adapted, at constant torque,
to implement a strategy of regeneration by injecting fuel
into the cylinders in at least one post-injection
operation in conventional manner.

30 These means are controlled by a pilot unit given
overall reference 8, that is adapted to detect a request
for regeneration req.RG, e.g. delivered by a supervisor
of the depollution means, and thus constituting a request
for post-injection, the pilot unit also being connected
35 to means 9 for detecting that the vehicle accelerator
pedal is being raised and to means given overall

reference 10 for detecting a stage during which the engine is idling.

These means may present any suitable structure.

Furthermore, the pilot unit 8 is also connected to
5 means for acquiring the temperature downstream from the catalyst-forming means 2, these acquisition means being given overall reference 11.

These means comprise any suitable temperature sensor.

10 Thus, on detecting a request for regeneration and thus for post-injection, the pilot unit 8 can detect that the vehicle accelerator pedal is being raised or that the vehicle engine is idling, as represented by step 12 in Figure 2;

15 The unit 8 is then adapted to acquire the temperature downstream from the catalyst-forming means during a step 13 in order to respond to said temperature by determining, during a step 14, a maximum duration for applying post-injections while the engine is returning to 20 idling as a result of the accelerator pedal being raised, or while the engine is idling.

During steps 15 and 16, the unit 8 monitors the time during which post-injections are being used, and detects the moment when said length of time reaches the 25 predetermined maximum duration for the application of post-injections.

If this duration reaches the predetermined maximum application duration while the engine is returning to idling as a result of the accelerator pedal being raised, 30 as represented by step 17, then the pilot unit 8 is adapted to interrupt the or each post-injection immediately, as illustrated by step 18.

Otherwise, if the duration of utilization reaches the predetermined maximum application duration while the 35 engine is idling, as represented by step 19, then the pilot unit is adapted, in a step 20, to reduce the or

each post-injection progressively in application of a slope, e.g. a slope that can be calibrated.

It should also be observed that such a system can operate with depollution means constituted by a particle filter, or a NOx trap, and that an additive may also be mixed with the fuel in conventional manner for deposition, together with the particles with which it is mixed, on the depollution means in order to facilitate regeneration thereof by reducing the combustion temperature of the soot trapped therein.

In conventional manner, the additive is present in the particles after the additive-containing fuel has been burnt in the engine.

It is also possible to envisage using an additive that forms a NOx trap.

It will be understood that such a structure enables post-injections to be applied for a maximum duration during stages of idling or while the accelerator pedal is being raised.

This maximum duration is presented in the form of a timer that empties, i.e. counts down or decrements with increasing time spent in stages of idling and/or of the accelerator pedal being raised, and while also in a regeneration stage. The timer is reinitialized after these stages have come to an end.

The system makes it possible to limit the quantity of fuel that is post-injected during stages in which the accelerator pedal is being raised or the engine is idling while the temperature levels in the exhaust line are the most unfavorable.

By limiting in this way the total quantity of fuel that is post-injected during these stages, which in any event are not the most effective stages from the point of view of regenerating the depollution means, the proportion of effective post-injection time is optimized and the extent to which the engine lubricating oil is diluted by fuel is limited.

Finally, this also makes it possible to limit the risk of the oxidation function suddenly ceasing to be active, which would lead to a deficit in HC conversion and thus to a puff of HCs from the exhaust that could 5 lead to the generation of smoke and/or odors.

Naturally, other embodiments could be envisaged.

Thus, for example, the depollution means and the oxidation catalyst-forming means could be integrated in a single element, and in particular on a common substrate.

10 By way of example, a particle filter integrating the oxidation function could be envisaged.

Similarly, a NOx trap integrating such an oxidation function could also be envisaged, whether the trap is in the form of an additive or otherwise.

15 The oxidation function and/or the NOx trap function could be performed by an additive mixed with the fuel, for example.